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Letter dated 28 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you with regard to the letters and annexes from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan dated 2 May 2003 (S/2003/528) and 11 July 2003 (S/2003/706), circulated as documents of the Security Council.

In fact there is nothing new in the irresponsible policy of Azerbaijan to use all possible means to justify their groundless claims over Nagorno Karabagh and unsubstantiated allegations against Armenia. The motives for the continuous repetition of anti-Armenian propaganda at this time are absolutely obvious. They are the current circumstances of the upcoming presidential elections in Azerbaijan. In this context, it is not unexpected if the United Nations and other international organizations are deliberately flooded by Azerbaijan with a new wave of disinformation, with the clear intention of serving Azerbaijan's domestic political interests.

In regard to Azerbaijan's vacuous allegations about the presence of radioactive waste around Nagorno Karabagh, the representatives of the European Department of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Europe Section of the Technical Cooperation Department of IAEA officially denied Azerbaijani charges that radioactive waste from the Armenian nuclear power plant is buried in territories adjacent to Nagorno Karabagh.

On the issue of vandalizing historical and cultural monuments, deeds speak louder than words. The Mosque in Shushi, for example, is being renovated under the auspices of the Nagorno Karabagh authorities, even as Azerbaijanis continue the destruction of Armenian historic monuments and tombstones in Nakhichevan and other formerly Armenian populated regions. Our reports and protests on this form of "ethnic cleansing" have been submitted to the appropriate international organizations. Armenian authorities and non-governmental organizations have requested UNESCO to review these destructions. However, Azerbaijan has refused to receive relevant experts.

As regards the implementation of Security Council resolutions (of 1993) on the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, a clear attempt is made by the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan to apply these resolutions selectively in a partial, self-serving manner. Indeed, it is Azerbaijan which is in violation of these resolutions, which urge the parties concerned to pursue negotiations within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group, as well as through direct contacts between them. Azerbaijan's refusal to engage in direct negotiations with the elected representatives of Nagorno Karabagh

is one of the main impediments to the resolution of the conflict. By denying various positive developments since the adoption of the Security Council resolutions, the author of the letters tries to discredit numerous efforts and initiatives undertaken by the co-chairpersons of the OSCE Minsk Group — the very body entrusted with the settlement of the conflict in the above-mentioned documents.

Azerbaijan fails to acknowledge that Armenia has done exactly what the Security Council has called on Armenia to do: to use its good offices with the leadership of Nagorno Karabagh to help find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Azerbaijan's claims for the "restoration of its territorial integrity" are legally and historically deficient since Nagorno Karabagh has never been part of independent Azerbaijan. The resulting situation is a forced reaction to Azerbaijan's own decision to use military force to suppress the legitimate and just quest of the people of Nagorno Karabagh to peacefully exercise their right of self-determination.

Finally, with regard to the accusations of recent ceasefire violations, it should be noted that those who are officially entitled to monitor the line of contact have drawn no conclusions which implicate the Armenian or Nagorno Karabagh defence forces. On the contrary, the ceasefire violations are the logical culmination of Azerbaijan's war-mongering of the past two years. It is totally unacceptable and alarming that Azerbaijani officials, including the Foreign Minister, are transparently exploring the possibilities for abandoning the negotiating process in favour of the military solution of the conflict. Instead, I should like to call on the Azerbaijani side to occupy themselves with the peace process constructively rather than resorting to unchanged rhetoric.

I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm once again the position of the Government of Armenia, which is to work towards the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict through mutual compromises based on international norms and the realities on the ground.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Armen **Martirosyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative